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The Repentance in 2 Peter 3:9

Posted By [ResLight](#) On April 17, 2009 @ 7:12 pm In [Armageddon](#), [Jehovah's Witnesses](#), [Repentance](#) |

"Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance."

2 Peter 3:9, *New World Translation*

The claim is made by some that this scripture indicates that those who are destroyed at the end of this age will be eternally destroyed, and God is thus trying, through some human agencies, to convert as many of the world as possible in order that they might escape eternal destruction.

What is this scripture actually saying? Is Yahweh (Jehovah) determined to eternally destroy billions of blinded men, women and children because they fail to repent before his final wrath is expressed upon Satan's empire? At first glance, and by taking the scripture out of context, and with such an idea in mind, it would appear that this is what Peter was saying. However, let us look more closely at the context and the Greek text and the meaning of what Peter was saying comes in clearer view.

2 Peter 3:9, *Westcott & Hort Interlinear*

(from [Bible Students Library](#) ^[1] DVD)

ou bradunei kurios tees epaggelias hws tines

NOT IS BEING SLOW LORD OF THE PROMISE, AS SOME (ONES)

3756 1019 2962 3588 1860 5613 5100

braduteeta heegountai alla makrothumei

SLOWNESS THEY ARE CONSIDERING, BUT IS BEING LONG IN SPIRIT

1022 2233 0235 3114

eis humas mee boulomenos tinas apolesthai alla

INTO YOU, NOT WISHING ANY (ONES) TO BE DESTROYED BUT

1519 4771_7 3361 1014 5100 0622 0235

pantas eis metanoian chwreesai

ALL (ONES) INTO REPENTANCE TO ALLOW SPACE FOR.

3956 1519 3341 5562

In this we should note that Peter is not writing his letter to the world, but to those "who have obtained a faith ... by the righteousness of our God and the Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:1) In 2 Peter, chapters One and Two, he is encouraging these to make their calling and choosing sure, and seeks to rouse them by means of reminders, and warns them of the false teachers, and those who leave the truth. He is not talking about the world, but those who had received the knowledge of the truth, and were turning away from it. In chapter Three, Peter begins to speak of the patience of God, as has been expressed toward the world, and then he says to God's people: "Yahweh has not been slow respecting his promise, as some consider slowness, but he is patient with you [who believe] because he does not desire any to be lost [Strong's Greek #622, not the same word used in 2 Peter 3:7,16, but it is the same as used in Matthew 18:14; Luke 15:6,9; John 6:39; 18:9; 2 John 1:8] but desires all [of you who believe] to attain to repentance." These believers were in great danger of not making their calling and election sure, thus losing out in the great reward being offered to them. He had already given them the means of attaining to the repentance, the making of their minds over (Romans 12:2, NWT) so as to overcome, so as to make their calling and election sure, as shown in 2 Peter 1:2-11, that they not lose out in their reward in the kingdom. Getting the full picture of what Peter is speaking of helps us to appreciate even more the love, justice, wisdom and power as shown in God's great divine plan of the ages.

<http://bible.crosswalk.com/Lexicons/Greek/grk.cgi?number=622> ^[2]

This is further shown in the scriptures that follow in 2 Peter 3:14-16a: "Hence, beloved ones, since you are awaiting these things, do your utmost to be found finally by him spotless and unblemished and in peace. Furthermore, consider the patience of the Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul according to the wisdom given him also wrote you, speaking about these things as he does also in all his letters." He further states: "You, therefore, beloved ones, having this advance knowledge, be on your guard that you may not be led away with them by the error of the law-deying people and fall from your steadfastness." (2 Peter 3:17) Thus we see that in the context, Peter is not speaking of the world, but his concern is for those who have believed, that they attain the full repentance, to "press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14) — making their calling and election sure — that they may not lose the rewards offered to them in the kingdom.

Something else to note is that the Greek word *Apollumi* (Strong's #622) does not necessarily mean eternal destruction, but it can refer to many kinds of losses. In Matthew 10:36, Jesus told his disciples to go to the "lost (apollumi) sheep of the house of Israel." He was not telling his disciples to go to sheep that have been eternally destroyed, but he is referring to their "lost" condition. In Mark 9:41, Jesus told his disciples: "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose (apollumi) his reward." The thought is not here that every person who gives to Jesus' disciples had a reward that he was not going to lose, but that the future reward due them would not be lost. In 2 John 1:8, John tells the Christian: "Watch yourselves, that we don't lose (apollumi) the things which we have accomplished, but that we receive a full reward." The "full reward" that a Christian can receive is joint-heirship with Jesus. To lose this reward does not mean that one has it and then loses it, but rather that he would lose it the sense that of the ultimate goal. Nor does failure to attain that high reward necessarily mean that the one who fails to attain will be eternally destroyed. If this was the thought in 2 Peter 3:9, then what Peter could have been referring to was losing the goal of the prize of the high calling. There are two classes who fail to attain the "full" reward, one of which simply retain the position of heirs of God, and the other would be those represented as one who willfully "has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant with which he was sanctified an unholy thing, and has insulted the Spirit of grace." (Hebrews 10:29) For such a willful sin, there is no more sacrifice. — Hebrews 10:26.

Nevertheless, Jehovah has indeed been patient with the world; his patience toward the world, and his love for the world of mankind has been so great that he sent his Son to die as the savior of the world. (John 3:16,17) Later, Jesus stated: "If anyone hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I came, not to judge the world, but to save the world." (John 12:47, NWT) The world is already judged in Adam, thus John says of those that disobey the son: "The wrath of God [the wrath upon man through Adam] remains upon him" (John 3:36); thus: "He that does not exercise faith has been judged already (through Adam). (John 3:16, **NWT**; See Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21,22) Jesus, however, shows in what way he came to save the world, showing that their salvation will result in a new judgment "in the last day." — John 12:48.

When Adam disobeyed, the punishment that was placed upon him was not the second death (for which no ransom is provided), but the condemnation was what we might term "the first death" — death and sheol [hades] (for which a ransom is provided). (Hosea 13:14) The human race has inherited this condemnation through Adam, but God's love caused his Son to be "made flesh," "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death . . . that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." — Genesis 2:17; 3:17-19; Romans 5:6-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21,22; Matthew 20:28; John 1:14; 3:14-18; Hebrews 2:9.

God exercised patience toward Adam in allowing Adam to continue to live, but eventually God did bring the sentence of death to Adam. God could have justly taken Adam's life right away, but he foresaw a better way of settling the matter of disobedience once for all time. Thus he has allowed a short period of time, a few millennia, in which man may be "exercised" by sin, and its futile results. (Ecclesiastes 1:2,13,14; Romans 8:20) The purpose is to eventually have all creation willingly in harmony with himself, for such harmony will then be known to be to the advantage of all creation.

Thus, Jehovah's patience, toward the sinful race of mankind the will not last forever. God "has appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness" — "the day of judgment and perdition [destruction] of ungodly men; but . . . do not be ignorant of this one thing, that one day with Yahweh is as a thousand years." — Acts 17:31; 2 Peter 3:7,8; Psalm 90:4.

During the past six millennia of mankind's history since Adam, Satan, "the god of this world," has been permitted to blinded the minds of the people. (2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9) As a result, the world has been living in darkness, so that darkness has covered the earth and "gross darkness the people." However, in the world's coming great judgment day Satan is bound, "that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years are ended." — Isaiah 60:2, Revelation 20:2,3,7.

"In that day," spoken of in Revelation as a 1,000 years, Jesus will judge mankind, but then "the earth will be full of the knowledge of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea." It will be that time that people will say: "Look, this is our God. We have waited for him, and he will save us . . . We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." — Isaiah 11:9,10; 25:6-9; 40:5; 52:10; Jeremiah 31:34; Habakkuk 2:14.

But today, the church is being tried and chosen out of the world before the world of mankind. There is a purpose for this, since the saints of this age will rule with Jesus over the earth in 1,000-year judgment day and assist in judging the world, offering to mankind "the water of life freely." — Daniel 7:22,27; 1 Corinthians 6:2; Obadiah 21; Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:29,30; Romans 8:16-21; 2 Timothy 2:11,12; Revelation 3:21; 5:9,10; 20:4,6; 22:17.

The promise is made that through Abraham's seed, all the nations, the heathen, will be blessed. The seed is not only Jesus, but also all who, in this age, belong to Christ. The blessing comes to the heathen while Satan is abysed, so that he cannot deceive them. — Genesis 12:3; 22:16-18; Galatians 3:7-9,16,29; Hebrews 6:13-20; Acts 3:19-25; Revelation 20:1-4.

It is during the time when Satan is abysed and that there are no deceptions, that the unbelieving of this age will be raised from hades (sheol), and enlightened by and judged individually by the things written in

the books that are to be opened at that time, not by the collective judgment received through Adam. (Psalm 6:5; 146:4; Isaiah 2:2-4; Daniel 12:2; John 5:28,29 NASV; John 11:11-14; 12:47,48; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; 2 Peter 3:4)

Recognizing that the judgment takes place in the "last day" (John 12:47,48), and also that those who will be doing the judging with Jesus will be raised in the same "last day" (John 6:39,40,44,54; 11:24), we recognize that the saints must be raised first, before the world, in order for them to participate with Jesus in this judgment. (Revelation 20:6) Realizing this helps us to understand the time when Jesus comes to judge the heathen, as described in Matthew 25:31-46. The judgment of the unbelieving heathen (nations) as individuals (not as in Adam) cannot begin until after the saints are raised in the last day.

Thus we read that "When the Son of man will come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then will he sit on the throne of his glory. Before him all the nations [the unbelieving heathen - Psalm 46:10; 67:72:1,11,17; 96:3,10; Isaiah 2:2-4; Ezekiel 37:28; 38:16; 39:7] will be gathered [from hades and death -- Revelation 20:12,13], and he will separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." The "holy angels" referred to are probably the saints, especially the joint-heirs who will come with Jesus to rule and judge the earth. In the parable, those whom he finds to be righteous, pictured as sheep (those who become sheep in the next age, not Christ's sheep of this present age — John 10:14-15), will be given everlasting life and will "inherit the kingdom" on earth (the meek will inherit it — Matthew 5:5; Psalm 37:9,10,29), whereas those who will not have proved worthy, pictured as goats, will "go away into everlasting punishment [Greek, kolasin, cutting-off]" in the second death, never to live again. "All the wicked he will destroy." — Matthew 25:31-46; Psalm 145:20; Revelation 20:9,15; 21:8.

The destruction of the wicked at the end of that thousand years is symbolized by their being cast into the "lake of fire," "which is the second death," into "everlasting fire [fire is an apt symbol, not of preservation, but of destruction], prepared for the devil [who is to be destroyed, annihilated -- Hebrews 2:14; Ezekiel 28:19] and his angels" — Revelation 20:14,15; 21:8; Matthew 25:41.

Then it will be true that "The soul that is sinning, it will die." Eventually "every soul who will not hear [obey] that prophet [Christ] will be destroyed from among the people." The "wicked will be no more." — Psalm 37:9,10; Ezekiel 18:4,20; Acts 3:19-23.

Thus God's patience will lovingly provide ample provision for the world to repent even into the age to come, after Satan is abyssed. It will be then, especially, that the principle of 2 Peter 3:9 will apply to the world in general.

For further study, we recommend:

[Will Billions Be Eternally Destroyed in the Battle of Armageddon?](#) ^[3]

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Keys: Armageddon, Jehovah's Witnesses, Bible Students, eternal destruction, repentance, the Lord is not slack, divine plan of the ages, Apollumi, Christian overcomers, second death, punishment

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